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UNH Media Relations

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UNH Students To Grant Dream To Retired Businessman And World War II Veteran

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EDITORS AND REPORTERS: You are welcome to attend the Dec. 13 event. Please RSVP to Lori Wright at lori.wright@unh.edu and 603-862-0574.

DURHAM, N.H. - A group of University of New Hampshire students will make a dream come true for a World War II veteran and successful businessman who always wished he had gone to college.

The UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics students will welcome John Heim of Bedford, NH, as an honorary member of the Entrepreneurial Venture Creation Class of 2009 on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008. The festivities begin at 2 p.m. at Carlyle Place, 40 Route 101, Bedford.

Born in 1907, Heim's formal education ended in the seventh grade when he left school to help with the family business, a New Jersey meat and fish market. As an adult, Heim taught himself accounting and managed several family businesses, including accounting for mortgage debts during the Great Depression. He went on to have a successful career as a real estate manager and financier.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He and his wife of 46 years, Gladys, retired to New Hampshire 25 years ago. For the last eight years, Heim has lived at the Carlyle Assisted Living Facility in Bedford, NH. His wife passed away seven years ago.

Now at age 101, one of Heim's only regrets in life is that he never went to college. The students hope that by including Heim as a member of their class and presenting him with a class membership certificate, they will help make his academic dream come true.

"I was extremely close to my grandfather up until he recently passed away. Ageless Dreamer really made me think about the oldest generation. Whenever we think about someone getting older, we tend to forget that they have dreams and goals that they may have never managed to accomplish in their earlier days. Age shouldn't prevent someone from still dreaming," said Cole Connolly, UNH Whittemore School student and member of the Entrepreneurial Venture Creation Class of 2009.

The students involved with the Ageless Dreamer project are just one of several groups of students in the UNH Internship in Entrepreneurial and Management Practice class who conduct a consulting project with area nonprofit organizations. This semester, students also are working with Autism Respite Resource Outreach, Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy, Krempels Brain Injury Foundation, NH Art Association, NH Carbon Challenge, NH Department of Corrections, Correctional Industries, Southeast New Hampshire Habitat for Humanity, and Women's Business Center, Inc.

The course was created in 2000 by Jeff Sohl, professor of decisions sciences and director of the Center for Venture Research, and Ross Gittell, James R. Carter Professor and professor of

management.

"What we try to instill with our entrepreneurship students is the idea of giving something back to society and the business world using their business skills. Working with these various nonprofit groups affords students the opportunity to understand the importance of using their skills to help nonprofits in the business world," Sohl said.

"The team working with the Ageless Dreamer Foundation decided to take the concept of giving one step further, on their own, to recognize an individual who has a dream to receive some form of academic recognition for his long time work in the accounting world. So through a joint effort of this entrepreneurial studies option, the Ageless Dreamer Foundation, and the students, this was able to happen," he said.

Founded in January 2006, the Ageless Dreamer Foundation is a Dover, NH-based nonprofit that makes long-held dreams come true for the oldest generation. The group aims to erase the stigma of being older, which has become so prevalent in our society, and encourage the nation's oldest generation to continue to dream.

"For most of us, dreams are the things that life is made of. But in today's society, if you're older, dreaming is too often in vain. The Ageless Dreamer Foundation is dedicated to the sole proposition that being part of our oldest generation is no reason for having to dream in vain," said Laurie Widmark, founder of the Ageless Dreamer Foundation.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a New England liberal arts college and a major research university with a strong focus on undergraduate-oriented research. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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